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U.S. Government Support for the Democratic Aspirations of the Venezuelan People

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“The United States stands with the brave people of Venezuela as they strive for a return to dignity and democracy.”

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo





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What is going on in Venezuela?

Slide towards Dictatorship: On January 10, 2019, Nicolás Maduro illegally assumed the presidency of Venezuela, despite the lack of free and fair elections. As he has done for years to retain power, Maduro arbitrarily jails or bans prominent political leaders and uses the distribution of food as a tool for social control. He manipulated the electoral process and timeline to his advantage; electoral irregularities included everything from intimidation and disenfranchisement of voters to improper tabulation of the results. The freely and fairly elected Venezuelan National Assembly, in accordance with the Venezuelan constitution, determined the presidency was vacant because Maduro claimed victory in a fraudulent election.

A country in crisis: Meanwhile the economy and basic social services have continued to spiral downward, leading to a growing humanitarian crisis. For example:

- ◆ Nearly 9 out of 10 Venezuelans live in poverty
- ◆ More than 3 million Venezuelans have fled the country
- ◆ 90% of families report not being able to buy enough food and Venezuelans lost an average of 24 pounds in 2018.
- ◆ The country's inflation rate is over 1 million percent and growing

Restoring Democracy: On January 23, National Assembly President Juan Guaidó, supported by the democratically-elected National Assembly and the Venezuelan constitution, assumed the interim Presidency of Venezuela in an effort to restore democracy and constitutional rule. As of May 8, 53 countries, along with the majority of the Venezuelan people, join the United States in recognizing Juan Guaidó as the legitimate interim President of Venezuela.

How is the United States helping? United States policy supports the interim government, the National Assembly, and the Venezuelan people in their struggle for a stable, democratic, and prosperous Venezuela. In service of this goal, the United States has undertaken a series of strong policy actions since 2017 meant to pressure the former Maduro regime and support democratic actors. In addition, the U.S. is providing robust support for the region's humanitarian response to this crisis.

The U.S. effort focuses on three key pillars:

1. Sanctions and Visa Revocations

U.S. actions ensure the former Maduro regime cannot rely on the U.S. financial system for its destructive practices. The U.S. government has made over 150 designations of individuals and entities in Venezuela since 2017 via Executive Orders (E.O.) and the Kingpin Act. Learn more about these actions [here](#). More details on the U.S. Department of Treasury Sanctions are located [here](#).

In addition, The United States has imposed visa restrictions on individuals responsible for undermining Venezuela's democracy, including numerous Maduro-aligned officials and their families. Since January 10, 2019, the United States has revoked more than 700 visas, including 107 of former diplomatic personnel.

2. Diplomatic engagement

The United States is working alongside regional partners to help Venezuelans return their country to a prosperous democracy and hold Maduro and those who support him accountable for the current political, economic, and humanitarian crises. On January 24, 2019, the United States and 15 other OAS member states recognized Juan Guaidó as the interim President of Venezuela. On April 9, the OAS approved a resolution to accept Guaidó's

nominee Gustavo Tarre as Venezuela's representative to the Permanent Council. The Lima Group, consisting of 14 countries in Latin America, was founded in 2017 to find a peaceful resolution to the Venezuelan crisis. They have been committed to that goal since and issued several declarations in 2019, including a 17-point statement on April 15 calling on the UN and other international organizations for additional support; rejecting military intervention; and urging unity of process among partners supporting Venezuela.

3. Humanitarian and Development Assistance

U.S. assistance supports emergency response efforts throughout the region, and builds long-term capacity to assist those who have fled the crisis in Venezuela. Total regional support is more than \$256 million since Fiscal Year 2017, including:

- ◆ More than \$213 million in humanitarian response.
- ◆ \$43 million in economic and development assistance.

On January 24, Secretary Pompeo announced the United States is ready to provide an additional \$20 million in initial humanitarian assistance to the people inside Venezuela.

For more information about United States' humanitarian assistance, please visit: <https://www.usaid.gov/EstamosUnidosVE> and <https://www.state.gov/overseas-assistance-by-region/europe-central-asia-and-the-americas/#Venezuelans>.

Find all releases, including remarks by Secretary Pompeo, Special Representative to Venezuela Abrams, and other key actions by the State Department [HERE](#).

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